

REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 27, 28, 30, 31, and 33-44 are now pending in the present application. Claims 27 and 31 have been amended. Claim 29 has been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17-21, 23-26, and 32 were previously canceled. Claims 3, 4, 27, and 33 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Reasons For Entry of Amendments

The present amendments should be entered into the official file in view of the fact that the amendments to the claims automatically place the application into condition for allowance. In the alternative, if the Examiner does not believe that the application is in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner enter the amendments for the purposes of appeal. This Amendment reduces the issues on appeal by amending independent claim 27 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 29, and canceling claim 29.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has stated that claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 33-38, 40-42, and 44 are allowed, and that claims 28, 29, 31, and 39 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. As noted below, independent claim 27 is amended herein to incorporate

the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 29. Therefore, independent claim 27 is in condition for allowance. Claim 29 is now canceled.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 27, 30, and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Nogi et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,894,832. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, independent claim 27 is amended herein to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 29. Therefore, independent claim 27 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent claim 29 is now canceled, and dependent claim 31 is amended to reflect the cancellation of claim 29 and the changes to independent claim 27. Each of dependent claims 28, 30, 31, 39, and 43 is in condition for allowance due to their dependence on allowable claim 27, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) are respectfully requested.

All claims of this application are now in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.


Applicants respectfully petition under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and § 1.17 for a two-month extension of time in which to respond to the Examiner's Office Action.


In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Carl T. Thomsen, Registration No. 50,786 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Paul C. Lewis, #43,368

PCL/CTT/az 
0505-1242P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000